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wp/2017/12/08/gabrielle-union-on-metoo-the-floodgates-have-opened-for-white-women/.

46. Some scholars argue that in at least some contexts, survivors may have a duty to disclose in spite of the potential harms of disclosure (see, for example, Ashwini Vasanthakumar, "Epistemic Privilege and Victims' Duties to Resist their Oppression," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 35, no. 3 [2018]: 465–80). Survivors' duties to disclose is an important subject of conversation that is well beyond the scope of this article. For the purposes of this article, I'm most concerned with exploring the impact #MeToo has on survivors, instead of whether or not survivors have a duty to disclose. In other words, I'm more interested in evaluating #MeToo than in evaluating the duties of survivors themselves.
47. Debra L. Jackson, "'Me Too': Epistemic Injustice and the Struggle for Recognition," *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (2018): 5.
48. Yurcaba, "For Survivors of Prison Rape, Saying 'Me Too' Isn't an Option."
49. Catharine A. MacKinnon, "#MeToo Has Done What the Law Could Not," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/04/opinion/metoo-law-legal-system.html.
50. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this point.
51. See, for example, the documentary *Surviving R. Kelly*.
52. In some ways, #MeToo has counteracted its own goal of public education. Since the movement has tended to be most accessible and receptive to the stories of famous white survivors, it may have perpetuated the false notion that the way famous white survivors experience sexual harassment and assault is universal to all survivors. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this point.
53. Diana Nyad, "My Life After Sexual Assault," *The New York Times*, November 9, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/opinion/diana-nyad-sexual-assault.html.
54. Alyssa Milano, "Alyssa Milano on Joining Time's Up," *Rolling Stone*, January 4, 2018, https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/alyssa-milano-on-joining-times-up-women-are-scared-women-are-angry-204035/.
55. Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," *Cultural Critique* 20 (Winter 1991–1992): 29.
56. Ibid., 24.
57. See Sista II Sista, "Sista's Makin' Moves" in *Color of Violence*, ed. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 196–207.

Beyond Silence, Towards Refusal: The Epistemic Possibilities of #MeToo

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On September 27, 2018, I sat watching the painfully careful and exceedingly brave way in which Dr. Christine Blasey Ford navigated testifying in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding now Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh's alleged assault of her. As this took place, something happened: survivors of sexual violence—friends and acquaintances, primarily women—began to post their own stories of sexual violence on Facebook and Twitter. The strength that Dr. Blasey Ford demonstrated inspired many survivors to disclose the details of their stories, many for the first time. As they did so, the sense of solidarity among them grew. It was not entirely unlike and was undoubtedly inspired by the #MeToo moment that preceded it nearly a year before in October 2017 when the hashtag exploded on social media. What was originally called the #MeToo moment had grown into a movement.

Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony was also personally significant. In that moment of watching her and seeing the many posts catalyzed by her testimony, something in me shifted. It is what I have come to understand as a moment of tremendous epistemic refusal galvanized by the similar gestures of refusal I saw all around me. For decades, I had remained largely quiet about my own sexual assault. I had done so for the reasons that many victims of sexual violence do: because of the threats, obstacles, and harms that sexual violence survivors commonly face in rape culture. These include how we are pressured to remain silent and how our confidence in our knowledge about the violence we endured is undermined. This silencing and undermining are accomplished through widespread practices of credibility erosion as well as ostracization and shaming. Sexual violence survivors can be harmed both with regard to their ability to know the truth of their own experiences, as well as the ability to share their knowledge with others. Spurred on by the bravery of other survivors and a desire to exhibit the same form of bravery as a gesture of solidarity, I decided to break my silence.

So, I disclosed to 1,020 or so of my closest friends on Facebook that I, too, was a rape survivor. This is what I wrote:

> Dr. Blasey Ford's story is much like my own, except I was unable to escape from my perpetrator, who raped me when I was 16. It was a violent event that shattered my life and shaped much of who I am today.
>
> I have spent over two decades largely silent and ashamed. Not any longer. Not after today. After what I just witnessed, I stand firmly in solidarity and in strength with all survivors of sexual violence and will no longer be ashamed about what he did to me. That shame was never mine. It was always his.

My story was one in a deluge of stories that poured forth publicly on that day. In coming forward, I added my voice to a chorus of millions who had already spoken on social media as part of the wider #MeToo movement. What became clear to me in that moment was the power of the #MeToo movement to affect not only cultural, ethical, and political change, but equally importantly, *epistemic* transformation. It is that epistemic transformation that I want to consider in this article. For me, the drive to understand the possibilities of such transformation is rooted in a desire to understand my own epistemic shift, as well as the wider meaning of what I saw happening all around me on that day.

There are many ways to understand the meanings of the #MeToo movement. Analyses of its significance have proliferated in popular media; some academic analyses have also recently appeared.[1] Commentary on the philosophical and epistemic significance of the #MeToo movement has been less plentiful.[2] The specific moment of the #MeToo movement in which Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony garnered a widespread social media response from sexual violence survivors highlighted the power of a particular form of epistemic response, what I call

"epistemic refusal." In breaking our silence, those of us who are sexual violence survivors have used this strategy to refuse the dominant epistemic structures that have kept us tightly in check. Mass informal disclosure of survivor status represented in conjunction with hashtags such as #MeToo, #WhyIDidntReport, and #BelieveHer creates space for epistemic, ethical, and political community between survivors of sexual violence by denying hegemonic epistemic discourses of contemporary rape culture. Regarding Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony and the social media response it garnered, analysis of three main elements proves particularly illuminating: the nature of mass informal disclosure of sexual violence, what the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport reveals about refusing silence, and what the hashtags #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors can show us about what it takes to begin to overcome epistemic gaslighting.

MASS INFORMAL DISCLOSURE

The advent of the #MeToo Movement in October 2017 and the occasion of Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony represented the power of disclosure and, more specifically and technically, mass informal disclosure as a mechanism of epistemic refusal. Mass informal disclosure of sexual violence takes place when a survivor divulges information regarding their assault to a large group of people, often in a public context, absent the intention of that disclosure having some form of official implication or effect. Undoubtedly, the moment of #MeToo and #WhyIDidntReport gave rise to other forms of disclosure, too—countless private moments between friends, spouses, child and parent in which those who had been violated shared what had happened to them. These private, informal modes of disclosure represent a form of disclosure with a more limited scope than is found with mass informal disclosure. #MeToo and #BelieveHer presumably also gave rise to some cases of formal disclosure too—the realization that one was one of many survivors may have provided some impetus for the lodging of formal complaints—for example, with the police—regarding the sexual violence one had suffered. Formal modes of disclosure differ from mass informal disclosure in terms of the institutional or bureaucratic power and intervention they activate, sometimes unwantedly.

There is arguably always vulnerability in the face of the disclosure of sexual violence, no matter what its form, though the nature of that vulnerability will differ based on the kind and circumstances of disclosure.[3] Similarly, choosing to disclose one's status as a survivor is nearly always risky, though the extent and forms of associated risk can also differ. In its peculiar form of being simultaneously a disclosure to no one and everyone, mass informal disclosure is not without its own specific kinds of vulnerability and risk. Should the intention behind the disclosure be one of hoping for a public embracing of one's status as a survivor of sexual violence (an approach I do not recommend), then one can be vulnerable to everything from shaming to recrimination to indifference from those to whom one blasts one's status. The risks are myriad, as well, and include a possible reorienting of how others see you—layered now with pity, discomfort, or even fear. Other possible risks include all of the forces that kept you from saying anything in the first place—threats of violence, being called a liar or a whore, retraumatizing oneself through the process of disclosure, internalizing all of these consequences, and so on.

The predominant mode of disclosure catalyzed through the hashtags #WhyIDidntReport and #BelieveHer or #BelieveSurvivors was mass informal disclosure. And it is the epistemic space and possibilities that mass informal disclosure can open that I explore here. The mass informal disclosure that survivors engaged in during and after Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony embodied epistemic refusal in a couple of respects. They served as examples not so much of *resisting* our collective rape culture, in the sense of pushing back against it, as *refusing* its logic and outcomes entirely. Rather than pushing back against prejudicial epistemic standards that harm survivors, such as testimonial injustice and credibility deficit, those who engage in mass informal disclosure assert their experiences of violation in a way that denies the importance of epistemic uptake from others, hence beginning to reclaim the autonomy and power that was taken from them. Mass informal disclosure of this nature involves an implicit shift in the terms of epistemic exchange—it is an articulation of personal knowledge absent the requirement of epistemic uptake of that knowledge by the broader public—perhaps most especially those likely to doubt the credibility of rape survivors. Instead of further engaging the various ways in which rape victims are made to hustle for their worth through prejudicial epistemic standards, those who disclose begin to create a different knowledge economy by generating epistemic spaces of their own.

Of equal importance is how forms of mass informal disclosure of sexual violation can shift the focus from the credibility of the survivor to the wrongful actions of the perpetrator—moving feelings of shame and responsibility away from victim and back onto perpetrator. This was true in my own case: the form of mass informal disclosure in which I engaged served to take a festering bucket of shame and firmly shove it where it always should have been—with the person who raped me. And mass informal disclosure can also lay the groundwork for the creation of communities of solidarity among survivors of sexual violence, which is an aspect of what Tarana Burke has called for and represents one intention behind the important work she has done. This is one way of understanding the kind of epistemic spaces the #MeToo movement can create. These communities afford the creation of a different sort of epistemic subculture for and between survivors—a subculture that can be governed not by dominant epistemic structures that are prejudicial against survivors but rather by the forms of mutual understanding of both the harms of sexual violence and the epistemic injustices that keep survivors silent about those harms.

A CONTRAST IN #HASHTAGS

What I am designating as the second major moment of the #MeToo Movement, which involved Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony and the mass informal disclosures that it engendered, differed in several key regards from the initial #MeToo moment. One way to characterize that difference is through the associated hashtags as well as the meanings those hashtags were meant to carry. #MeToo was and is a

way of saying, this also happened to me. It was a way of raising one's hand, as Tarana Burke has noted.[4] One aspect of the impactful force of #MeToo was how it shattered some of the layers of denial around the sheer magnitude of sexual violation, bringing to light what many of us have long known: sexual violence is pervasive, systemic, and not at all rare. #MeToo garnered more than 12 million posts, comments, and reactions on Facebook alone in less than 24 hours, hence showing the world—or at least those who cared to take notice—that sexual violence is a shockingly widespread phenomenon. It was also a pivotal moment for the ways in which it helped survivors feel much less isolated, as they could concretely see that they were very much not alone. Thus, the advent of the #MeToo hashtag was perhaps more about quantity, that is, the overwhelming numbers of women who signaled in tweets and Facebook posts that they, too, had been victims of sexual violence, often without providing contextualizing details. In fact, this was one part of the power of it—the ability to disclose without needing to offer extensive details designed to justify the disclosure, to forestall challenges to one's credibility, or to seek affirmation.

In the second main moment of the movement, survivors who shared their own experiences during and after Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony often appended the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport as they detailed the myriad challenges survivors experience regarding formal disclosure in the wake of a sexual violation. And supporters of both Dr. Blasey Ford and the many others who told their stories on that day affixed #BelieveHer or #BelieveSurvivors to their posts, to emphasize the importance of giving proper epistemic weight to the claims of violation sexual violence survivors make. We can therefore see that Dr. Blasey Ford called forth a response that wasn't primarily about sheer quantity—some victims had, after all, already disclosed during the earlier #MeToo moment. Instead, it was about quality and circumstance in the sense that many focused on the contextual details of the obstacles to reporting. Concurrently, #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors represented a way to signal support for all of those who came forth on that day and to emphasize the importance of confronting patterns of credibility deficit that survivors so often experience.

#WHYIDIDNTREPORT

The hashtag associated with Dr. Blasey Ford's testimony, #WhyIDidntReport, highlights specific epistemic angles of the difficulties of disclosure in a society steeped in rape culture. There are many reasons why survivors of sexual assault don't report. What epistemic analysis of the underreporting of sexual violence highlights is at least twofold: both the widespread epistemic silencing and the epistemic gaslighting victims endure. One overarching way to understand social media posts that feature #WhyIDidntReport is as a strategy of epistemic refusal in response to epistemic silencing. (Gaslighting plays an interesting role for both #WhyIDidntReport and #BelieveHer/#BelieveSurvivors. Gaslighting in the context of the latter will be my focus in the next section.) Survivors deploy mass informal disclosure to lay bare the mechanisms of silencing and gaslighting they and others encounter. Rather than continuing to remain silent and doubtful about their own experiences or to rail against dominant epistemic systems, those who use #WhyIDidntReport do something else: they reveal the very mechanisms of epistemic oppression that so profoundly harm them for all to see.

While #WhyIDidntReport was designed to explore the barricades to formal reporting, it also represents an opportunity to consider the broader patterns of silencing survivors experience. There are different ways we don't tell and a multitude of reasons why we remain silent. In a sense, then, #WhyIDidntReport explores the vast and varied temporal landscape prior to disclosure, which is not to assume that disclosure is an inevitability—far from it. Disclosure also isn't a toggle switch. While moments of mass informal disclosure tend to have a certain sense of loudness or force about them, there can be many quieter, private moments of partial or attempted (and often inevitably thwarted) disclosure that survivors face. Thus, #WhyIDidntReport can tell us a lot about the risks and vulnerabilities that survivors know are there when they contemplate telling others they were violated.

As for my own story, the truth of what happened to me attempted to bubble up multiple times in my late teens, only to be forcibly stuffed back down. In addition to being outright threatened for my attempted informal disclosure, the indignities I encountered included being ostracized for being supposedly promiscuous and being told that I was lying in an attempt to stoke drama in my otherwise apparently very boring life. On the one hand, this reads as the ordinary drama of middle-class suburban girlhood. On the other hand, it is absolutely appalling that such an experience reads as ordinary drama at all. I was subjected to multiple instances of outright aggression that threated my well-being and social standing in my small-town Pennsylvanian community. I was threatened in ways that attempted to shatter my very sense of self. After experiences like that, formal reporting seemed an absolute impossibility.

My experience shows how the forces of violence visited upon survivors represent a complicated intermingling of the formal and informal. In my particular case, the informal mechanisms of social policing designed to maintain the impunity of boys and men functioned to ensure that the costs of formal reporting would be so high as to appear unfathomable. This is not to say that once survivors feel they can report, they will then be safe in doing so. The power that institutions such as law enforcement and the medical establishment possess can be, and all too frequently is, wielded against survivors themselves. While, in theory, institutional power may be designed to protect survivors, it can and often does, in fact, exacerbate their vulnerability. This can happen either by the devastating forms of resistance to the truth of the prevalence of sexual violence that institutions can enact or by a similarly damaging violation of survivor autonomy when institutions insist on the details of disclosure being shared and pursued in case they are formally actionable—as we find with contemporary mandatory reporting requirements on today's college and university campuses.

We can bring some of the difficulties of #WhyIDidntReport into focus by peering through lenses of epistemic analysis. The first lens is that of epistemic silencing. Among other epistemic feats rape culture accomplishes, silencing is one of the most pernicious. #WhyIDidntReport points to specific practices of epistemic silencing, which Kristie Dotson, following Gayatri Spivak understands as "a type of violence that attempts to eliminate knowledge possessed by marginal subjects…"[5] There is more than one way to silence a survivor of sexual violence. Dotson identifies two primary ways of silencing: testimonial quieting and testimonial smothering.[6] Testimonial quieting takes place "when an audience fails to identify a speaker as a knower. A speaker needs an audience to identify, or at least recognize, her as a knower in order to offer testimony."[7] If you don't believe a particular sexual violence survivor has the epistemic authority to be a knower in the first place, and are therefore incapable of identifying her as someone who could have reliable, valuable knowledge to share, why would you bother to listen to what she has to say? It is important to note that survivors of sexual violence may experience differing degrees of testimonial quieting based on the particular social position they occupy, as well as how their speaking might be perceived to support or hinder patriarchal aims. The degree of testimonial injustice visited on a survivor through forms of silencing often varies based on the particular race, sex, gender, and/or class of that survivor.

The second variety of silencing that helps to shed light on the epistemic mechanisms that cause survivors not to report is testimonial smothering. Testimonial smothering "occurs because the speaker perceives one's immediate audience as unwilling or unable to gain the appropriate uptake of proffered testimony. . . . Testimonial smothering, ultimately, is the truncating of one's own testimony in order to insure that the testimony contains only content for which one's audience demonstrates testimonial competence."[8] When people are raised in rape culture, they are epistemically conditioned to a kind of ignorance that renders them incapable of receiving some forms of testimony from sexual violence survivors. Many survivors already know this and therefore deliver only part of their experience—the parts that have some chance of being heard. This is a second way in which epistemological silencing makes plain why survivors often don't disclose and report. Or, if they do disclose, it makes clear why they sometimes choose only to disclose slivers of their experience.

When survivors deploy the hashtag #WhyIDidntReport, they reveal the mechanisms of testimonial quieting and smothering, thereby beginning to refuse the epistemic terms of engagement to which they have long been subjected. They refuse testimonial quieting by asserting their status as knowers. And they refuse testimonial smothering by asserting what they know without caring whether the broader audience has testimonial competence. In that moment, they are far more interested in connecting and building epistemic community with other survivors who believe what they know and who possess the testimonial competence to hear what they are saying.

BEYOND #BELIEVEHER AND #BELIEVESURVIVORS

Epistemic refusal is also present in how sexual violence survivors come to believe the truth of their own experiences, a process that can be thwarted mightily by another mechanism of epistemic oppression: epistemic gaslighting. Kate Abramson characterizes gaslighting as "a form of emotional manipulation in which the gaslighter tries (consciously or not) to induce in someone the sense that her reactions, perceptions, memories and/or beliefs are not just mistaken, but utterly without grounds—paradigmatically, so unfounded as to qualify as crazy. Gaslighting is . . . quite unlike dismissing someone, for dismissal simply fails to take another seriously as an interlocutor, whereas gaslighting is aimed at getting another not to take herself seriously as an interlocutor."[9] While Abramson characterizes gaslighting in the quote above primarily as a form of emotional manipulation, I take it to be in the spirit of what she is saying to assert that it is also very much a form of epistemic manipulation. Sexual violence survivors are frequently subjected to gaslighting of both an emotional and epistemic nature. They are told they are overreacting. It wasn't that bad. They are generating false memories. They were too drunk to really recall. They were too emotional to see the situation clearly, etc.

It is in these ways and more that sexual violence survivors' view of their own epistemic authority is undermined and sometimes outright obliterated. When one is told over and over again that what they thought had happened did not, in fact, actually happen, and that their belief that it did arises through their inability to properly perceive the true nature of experience because they are crazy, too emotional, inherently deceitful, etc., they all too often start to believe that they did not experience what they, in fact, actually did. Even more perniciously, they will begin to internalize the very mechanism that destabilizes and can obliterate their own sense of epistemic credibility and authority. That is to say, they will do it to themselves.

When sexual violence survivors engage in mass informal disclosure of their violation, they refuse the terms of engagement necessary to get gaslighting off the ground. Mass informal disclosure amounts to a broadcasting of their epistemic confidence in themselves and of their self-conception as agents with epistemic authority. They thereby refuse to buy into the undermining of the knowledge they have of their own experiences. They refuse to let others undermine their self-trust. They, in short, refuse to be gaslighted.

It is in view of these very common and utterly destructive experiences of epistemic gaslighting that I want to respond to the prevalence of #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors. Both hashtags offer an interesting window into this particular problem. The intentions behind #BelieveHer and #BelieveSurvivors are admirable ones—those who use such hashtags want to signal that they support survivors in trusting themselves. Use of both hashtags also functions as an implicit recognition of the pervasive epistemic gaslighting survivors encounter—a form of recognition that is very much needed. And it offers the beginnings of a shift away from a dominant framework of credibility in which survivors tend to come out on the losing end.

While appreciating the goodness of these intentions, I want to assert that in light of the pervasive nature of the gaslighting of sexual violence survivors, what is equally, if not more important is that survivors believe themselves and that they come to believe one another by stepping into a shared epistemic space of their own creation. This is to say that while believing her and believing survivors are both important things to do, there is perhaps something even more significant to accomplish. It is something that I take to be a paradigmatic move of epistemic refusal: for survivors to center on their own knowledge, build their self-trust and trust in one another, and in doing so, create epistemic communities through which they can further support one another.

Dr. Blasey Ford serves as a potent example in this regard: it was in and through her characterization of herself as "100 percent" sure that Kavanaugh was her attacker—even though some details of the evening in question were fuzzy—that other survivors could step into the truth of their own experiences, the certainty of their own testimony, and the power of their own epistemic authority. It is in and through such self-trust, truth, and power that we begin to refuse the epistemic deck that for so long has been so carefully and relentlessly stacked against us.

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NOTES

1. See, for example, Michelle Rodino-Colocino, "Me Too, #MeToo: Countering Cruelty with Empathy," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2018): 96–100; Reshma Jagsi, "Sexual Harassment in Medicine—#MeToo," *The New England Journal of Medicine* 378, 3 (2018): 209–11; Kaitlynn Mendes, Jessica Ringrose, and Jessalyn Keller, "#MeToo and the Promise and Pitfalls of Challenging Rape Culture through Digital Feminist Activism," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 25, no. 2 (2018): 236–46; Ritty Lukose, "Decolonizing Feminism in the #MeToo Era," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 36 (2018): 34–52; and Martha Chamallas, "Will Tort Law Have Its #MeToo Moment?" *Journal of Tort Law* 11, no. 1 (2018): 39–70.
2. There are some examples from within philosophy of analysis of the #MeToo Movement, most notably "#MeToo and Epistemic Injustice," a conference organized in fall 2018 by Linda Martín Alcoff and Charles W. Mills. See also Linda Martín Alcoff, *Rape and Resistance* (Medford, MA: Polity, 2018); and Debra Jackson, "'Me Too': Epistemic Injustice and the Struggle for Recognition," *Feminist Philosophical Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (2018): article 7.
3. See Ann J. Cahill, "Disclosing and Experience of Sexual Assault: Ethics and the Role of the Confidant," in *Vulnerability and the Politics of Care* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
4. Liz Rowley, "The Architect of #MeToo Says the Movement Has Lost Its Way," *New York Magazine*, October 23, 2018, https://www.thecut.com/2018/10/tarana-burke-me-too-founder-movement-has-lost-its-way.html, accessed 5/1/19.
5. Kristie Dotson, "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing," *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 236.
6. Ibid., 242–51.
7. Ibid., 242.
8. Ibid., 244.
9. Kate Abramson, "Turning Up the Lights on Gaslighting," *Philosophical Perspectives* 28, no. 1 (2014): 2.

The Speech Acts of #MeToo

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In the fall of 2017 I, along with many others, watched and participated as #MeToo unfolded across social media. Women, nonbinary folks, and some men shared their experiences of being sexually harassed or assaulted. Some went into gut-wrenching detail. Some simply wrote the hashtag #MeToo. Some named their assailants, though most did not. As more and more people chimed in, I remember being struck by the realization that *I did not know a single woman who hadn't been sexually violated in some way*. This thought was likely too sweeping, but it speaks to how overwhelming the moment was: it felt like everyone had a horror story. One month after it gained prominence, a Facebook estimate held that 45 percent of US users had at least one friend who had posted the statement "me too."[1] One year later, the hashtag had been used at least 19 million times across Twitter.[2] In the time since, the movement has continued to maintain a presence in the global social landscape.

#MeToo took work and energy; it took courage to speak up, and attending to the flood of stories day after day could be emotionally draining. It required emotional and epistemic labor to process the stories coming out, to sort through the various responses to those stories, and to figure out what to do next. For many it was retraumatizing, as survivors[3] relived their own violations by sharing their experiences publicly or by taking in the stories told by others. The movement made stark the extent of sexual violations occurring around us. Survivors and others performed this difficult labor with the hope that it would make some sort of difference.

One of the repeated questions to come up in the wake of the movement is, "Has #MeToo helped?" Or, put slightly differently, "Has #MeToo been successful?" Despite all the experiences of sexual harassment and abuse shared on social media, there hasn't been a corresponding significant uptick in holding perpetrators accountable for the sexual violations they commit. Some high profile figures lost their jobs (though often, the severance package they received would hardly be termed a hardship), some people were publicly censured (though think pieces are already heralding their "comebacks"), and a very few people have had legal charges filed against them (though it's not clear if anyone in the US, to date, has actually been prosecuted or found guilty as a result of #MeToo). If these are the measures of success, then it seems like #MeToo hasn't succeeded at much.

I hold that these metrics are the wrong way to evaluate #MeToo. Not simply because they focus on the wrong things (centering perpetrators rather than, say, the support given to survivors), but also because they misunderstand what kind of actions made up the movement. We need to have a better sense of what the movement *was* in order to evaluate the success of the movement. Speech act theory can help us do this. In what follows, I explore two ways of understanding the social media posts that comprised